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SUBJECT: COUNTER-TERRORISM STRATEGY - WHERE ARE THE  
MODERATE ARABS?

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Sensitive but unclassified.

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Discussion of the Secretary General's counter-terrorism strategy (ref A) continued May 15-18 in General Assembly informal consultations. Delegations were divided among those who urged the Assembly to craft a strategy from the elements on which all could agree and those who said there should be no counter-terrorism strategy unless there was agreement on all elements. Surprisingly, this latter group was led by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait and Jordan who joined Pakistan, Syria, and Iran in opposition to those who urged a pragmatic approach. They insisted that an exception for national liberation movements struggling against foreign occupation and state terrorism must be addressed in any "comprehensive strategy". Among the Arab states, only Morocco and Tunisia took a more moderate stance.

The Co-Chairmen (Spain and Singapore) plan to produce a draft paper in late May/early June for consideration during the next phase of discussions. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Co-Chairmen conducted a Chapter by Chapter discussion of the Secretary General's Report "Uniting Against Terrorism: Recommendations for a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" during the week of May 15. The EU, US, Eastern Europeans and most Latin Americans urged the GA to produce an action oriented strategy based on concrete counter-terrorism measures on which there is wide agreement. Many OIC members, Cuba and Venezuela, however, stressed the need to cover all aspects of terrorism from the definition, to root causes and state terrorism. Egypt pointed out that to be a comprehensive strategy, it must cover all of these elements. Saudi Arabia declared that "there will be no strategy unless

it is balanced. To be balanced it must include, 1) foreign occupation as one of the most important paragraphs because it is one of the main reasons for terrorism and 2) the challenge of state terrorism. Pakistan agreed that exclusion of controversial issues will not produce a comprehensive strategy. The Kuwaiti Permanent Representative added that she did not think that adopting the Secretary General's comprehensive counter terrorism strategy at the present stage in the reform discussions should be made a priority.

¶3. (SBU) In an effective rebuttal, the EU countered that the term "comprehensive strategy" is not mentioned in the GA's mandate but rather the strategy is to promote a "comprehensive response" to counter-terrorism which means involvement of all actors. The EU urged the Assembly to put aside the difficult issues (definition, state terrorism (which they rejected), etc.) being dealt with in the GA Legal Committee, not to avoid discussions but to avoid duplication of discussions. They denounced the concept of State terrorism, which the Jordanian delegate claimed is recognized by international humanitarian law and unspecified Security Council decisions. The EU supported examination of conditions conducive to terrorism but stressed that none of these could justify terrorist acts nor could there be any direct causal relationship with terrorist activities.

¶4. (SBU) Some delegations (Kuwait, Egypt, Pakistan) rejected the Secretary General's report while these and others underscored its perceived deficiencies in the manner in which it dealt with "root causes" (Kuwait, Pakistan, Egypt, Brazil, Jordan, Iran, Indonesia, Cuba, Venezuela, Lebanon, Malaysia, Syria), state terrorism (Egypt, Pakistan,

Jordan, Algeria, Lebanon, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Yemen) and national liberation as an exception (Kuwait, Pakistan, Guatemala, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Egypt, Syria, Yemen).

¶5. (SBU) Delegations, generally recognized the progress made by the Security Council CT Committees but some (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Philippines, Indonesia) urged rationalization and better co-ordination, particularly with regard to reporting requirements and country visits. There were complaints from Kuwait, Indonesia, Pakistan and Ecuador that the Report focused too much on Security Council counter-terrorism activities and the General Assembly should have the lead in that area. The delegate of Liechtenstein helpfully responded, "If we don't act, the Security Council will. Delegations must compromise in order to prove that the General Assembly has a role."

¶6. (SBU) There was broad support (EU, US, Turkey, Colombia, India, Peru, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia) for a focus on concrete counter-terrorism measures. There was also support for considering human rights issues related to terrorism. The plight of victims was highlighted as an area of concern but delegations envisioned dealing with it in different ways.

Benin and Guatemala called for reparations while Chile supported the stress on the need to assist victims but not through direct monetary compensation. Iran asked, what about those victimized by use of force under the pretext of counter-terrorism? On the same theme, Mexico said that such abuses cannot be justified and the issue should be considered by the Human Rights Council. The need for due process in sanctions listing/delisting was mentioned by the EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Pakistan, Switzerland, India, Cuba, Peru, Morocco and Liechtenstein.

¶7. (SBU) Some states (Benin, Ecuador, Pakistan) said that development should be a key element in any counter-terrorism plan but balked at the suggestion that UN Development Programme representatives could play a role in counter-terrorism efforts (Pakistan, Kuwait, Cuba, Afghanistan). The Kuwaiti representative said that any such activity would be inconsistent with their host state agreements.

18. (SBU) The next round of discussions will take place in June, following release of a working paper which the Co-Chairman will prepare on the basis of the informal discussions.

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